

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

This application has been carefully reviewed in view of the Office Action dated March 28, 2003. In that Office Action claims 1-19 were apparently examined, although the claims intended to be examined are claims 1-16 of Annexure B. The foregoing amendments are with respect to claims 1-16 of Annexure B, and if required the examiner is authorized, by Examiner's Amendment, to substitute these sixteen claims for the set of claims were the subject of the Office Action.

With regard to the cited prior art, the Office Action is simply not correct in asserting that US 2556283 (Lieberman) anticipates Claims 1, 4 and 14. The opaque mat 3 of Lieberman has a viewer side which abuts the transparent material (glass) 2 and a rear side which abuts the cardboard backing 5. The rear side of the opaque mat is attached to the picture housing member 7. Thus, the peripheral edge of the opening 4 in the opaque mat 3 is exposed, when the picture is viewed.

In contrast, Claims 1, 14 and now also Claim 15 (as amended) clearly specify that the outer abutment surface of the inner frame component overlaps a peripheral region of the **viewer side** of the outer panel thereby **to conceal a peripheral edge of the aperture**. Clearly, the picture frame of Lieberman does not teach this bearing in mind also that the cardboard backing 5 does not overlap an outer abutment surface of the picture housing member 7, nor does an outer abutment surface of the picture housing

member 7 of Lieberman conceal a peripheral edge of opening 6 in the cardboard backing 5.

A method of assembling a frame for an article as claimed in revised Claim 15, and in which the inner frame component is located between the inner and outer panels so that an inner abutment surface of the inner frame component overlaps a peripheral region of an inner panel in an abutting fashion while its outer abutment surface overlaps a peripheral region of the viewer side of the outer panel, thereby to conceal a peripheral edge of the aperture, is clearly not taught or suggested by Lieberman.

The feature outlined above provides a number of advantages over Lieberman. For example, assembly of the frame is greatly facilitated, since the inner frame component, or a sub-frame made up of four inner frame components, can merely be dropped in position in the aperture in the outer panel – see also page 11 lines 3 to 10 of the present application. Still further, the inner frame component serves to conceal any imperfections in cutting out the opening in the outer panel – see for example, page 9 line 17. Still further, the use of adhesive to secure the outer panel to the inner frame component, as is taught in Lieberman, and which is time consuming since the adhesive takes time to dry, can be avoided, with the outer and inner panels typically being stapled to the inner frame component – see page 7 lines 26 to 27.

As regards the rejection of Claim 16, the use of staples or tabs does indeed provide advantages over the use of adhesive, as discussed above.

Regarding the Office Action's rejection of Claims 2 and 4 as being obvious in the light of Lieberman when read with US 3382595 (Shore), it is

respectfully submitted that since Claim 1 has been shown to be both novel and non-obvious over Lieberman, Claims 2 and 4 which depend from Claim 1 are thus clearly also novel and non-obvious.

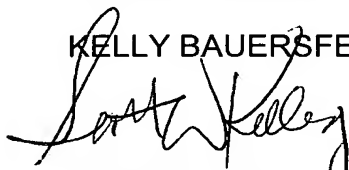
The Examiner's statement that Claim 3 would be allowable if re-written in independent form to include all the limitations of Claim 1 from which it depends, has been noted. However, in view thereof that Claim 1 is, as discussed hereinbefore, clearly novel and inventive over Lieberman, Claim has not at this stage been re-written.

REQUEST FOR EXTENSION OF TIME

Submitted concurrently herewith is a Request for One-Month Extension of Time to file Response, accompanied by the required fee.

Respectfully submitted,

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